

THE VOICE

Monthly Newsletter for our Australian Alumni Community

ISSUE 48 | FEBRUARY 2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members & Partners,

2025 marks a significant milestone for the Australia - Singapore bilateral relationship. Australia was the second country to recognize Singapore when it became independent in 1965, and the relationship grew from strengths to strengths over the years.

For 60 years Australia and Singapore have worked together to develop one of the most comprehensive partnerships spanning across education, defense, trade tourism. In 2015, the relationship was elevated through a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership which extended the partnership to include science and innovation, art and the digital economy.

In celebration of this milestone, on 5th February 2025 Australian High Commission kickstarted a yearlong celebration of events and activities with **G'day by the Bay 2025: Celebrating 60 Years of Friendship**. The event was held at The Fullerton Bay Hotel and was attended by prominent political and business leaders, members of Team Australia demonstrating the breadth and depth of the relationship.

Since, the announcement of **AAS' 70th Annual General Meeting**, we have seen significant interest from our members to attend the event and learn about the progress we have made over the past year. As the event will be held at the Australian High Commissioner's Residence, I would encourage everyone to register as early as possible to accommodate security and clearance requirements at the residence. If you are keen to attend the event, please register [HERE](#). The registration will close on **4th March 2025**.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to members who have reached out to express their interest to be part of the management committee. As an organization run by volunteers, we would not have made this progress if not for the selfless contribution by our volunteer leaders over the years. We are looking for more volunteers to join us and if you are keen to be part of the journey and set the direction ahead, please reach out to me or AAS Secretariat to discuss further.

Yours Sincerely,



Rajaneesh R Kurup
#forwardtogether



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JCU Singapore and AustCham Singapore launch the Business Sentiments Report 2024



The trade and business relationship between Australia and Singapore has grown significantly since the signing of the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) in 2003. Singapore is currently Australia's largest two-way trading partner, with trade valued at \$52.9 billion in 2022 as well as a major investor, contributing \$148.6 billion in foreign direct investment (ANZ, 2024)¹. Recent years have also seen both nations intensifying their focus on digital and green economies. For instance, landmark agreements such as the Australia-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement (DEA) in 2020 and the Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement (GEA) in 2022 have driven business collaboration and innovation, encouraging Australian companies to embrace sustainability and digital transformation in Singapore.

With such developments in mind, conducting in-depth surveys and interviews amongst AustCham members in 2024 to gauge business sentiment and the adoption of digital strategies and green initiatives was timely and relevant.

The Business Sentiments Report 2024 presents key insights into the current business climate, international strategies, and the adoption of digital and green initiatives.

of International Trade and Business in Asia (CITBA), the Australian Chamber of Commerce Singapore (AustCham) and communications partner Aroca Group. CITBA researchers – Associate Professor Pengji Wang, Dr Sook Rei Tan, Associate Professor Jacob Wood, former Campus Dean Professor Abhishek Bhati, and former Senior Lecturer Emiel Eijdenberg – designed the survey and interview questions, collected and analysed the data, and authored the report. AustCham facilitated participant recruitment and organised the launch event, while Aroca Group supported the design and media outreach.

The report was jointly produced by James Cook University's Singapore campus (JCU Singapore) Center

Adopting a mixed-method approach, the research team combined surveys and in-depth interviews to assess business sentiment and understand the adoption of digital strategies and green initiatives among AustCham members in Singapore.

"The report reinforces a shared commitment to advancing knowledge and fostering impactful business insights for Singapore and the broader Asia-Pacific region," says Associate Professor Wang Pengji, Acting Academic Head at JCU Singapore's Business School.

Ms Sue-Ann Wilson, Executive Director of AustCham Singapore, emphasised the value of collaboration adding "The Business Sentiments Report 2024 underscores the strength of our partnership with JCU Singapore and Aroca Consulting Group. This project offers a snapshot of AustCham member insights, equipping businesses with insights to reflect on challenges and seize opportunities to shape a sustainable, innovative future for the region."

Download the full report [here](#).

Find out more about the [Singapore campus of James Cook University](#).

Discover further information on [areas of research, and research strength at James Cook University in Singapore](#).

Singapore and the Opportunity, <https://www.anz.com.au/bluenotes/2024/may/anz-news-shayne-elliott-singapore-champion/>

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JCU Conversations is the premier podcast series of James Cook University, Singapore — bringing to you discussions with successful leaders in the industry (across fields such as business, education, sustainability, and more) while offering a deeper understanding of their personal lives, careers, inspirations, and approaches to success. Join our rotating chair of distinguished hosts as we find out: What makes these bright minds tick?

Latest ▾



JCU Conversations 33: Kau Yi Ming

Join us as we chat with Mr Kau Yi Ming, Venture Partner at Krux Asia and Managing Director at Orative Technologies. Mr. Kau takes us through his career journey from the military to the corporate world, entrepreneurship, and paying it forward as an angel investor and venture partner. In this episode, he shares about one of his greatest achievements and passions: driving digital transformation in organisations.

This episode's host: Dr Kim-Lim Tan, Lecturer at James Cook University in Singapore.



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Strengthening business ties between Singapore, Malaysia, and Victoria

Following the recent signing of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ), our Singapore team visited Johor Bahru recently to meet with the team at Johor Corporation, to explore potential investment opportunities between Johor and Victoria.

As Johor continues to grow its business hubs, Melbourne is strategically positioned to help Singaporean and Malaysian companies expand from the JS-SEZ into the Australian market.

The team also engaged in discussions on healthcare innovation with KPJ Healthcare Bhd, the company aimed at enhancing training and research capabilities for one of Malaysia's largest private hospital networks. They explored collaborative opportunities with stakeholders across Melbourne's four major biomedical precincts: the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct, The Alfred Medical Research, Monash Precinct, and Austin Health.

During a meeting with DF Automation & Robotics, the team explored how the company's advanced technology could benefit Victoria's logistics and warehousing industry, an area where Agribusiness remains a priority for the Victorian Government.

To wrap up the day, the team met with Sachi Aqua, to discuss potential collaborations in aquaculture research with Victorian universities.

If you're a company based in Singapore or Malaysia looking to expand into Melbourne, don't hesitate to get in touch with our Southeast Asia team for a conversation!

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/vgtisea/>



Transforming Lives in Southeast Asia: The Economic Benefits of Investing in Eye Health



At The Fred Hollows Foundation, we've always understood that investing in eye health transforms lives. Over the past 30 years, we've restored sight to more than 3 million people.

Now we have the data that demonstrates what we know.

The Fred Hollows Foundation has recently released a groundbreaking report in partnership with Victoria University's Institute of Strategic Economic Studies, that outlines the economic benefits of investing in eye health. The report, which used an investment case economic modeling technique, estimates the return on investment (ROI) in eye health to achieve the World Health Assembly (WHA) targets by 2030. The results show that investments in eye health are among the highest ROI of any disease intervention.

The report focuses on the two leading causes of blindness and vision impairment – cataract and refractive error – and models intervention costs and benefits across 19 countries in which The Foundation works. The benefits of restoring sight, which in this report focus solely on economic returns, include increased labour force participation and productivity, and improved education and learning.

Remarkably, cataract treatment, on average, returns US\$20.50 for every dollar spent, while refractive error treatments return on average US\$10.80 for myopia (nearsightedness) and US\$8 for presbyopia (age-related vision loss). Together, investment in the two leading causes of blindness and vision impairment will return on average US\$9.40 for each dollar spent.

This demonstrates what we all know – that investment in eye care has a great return.

Despite a dramatic economic upturn in recent years, the burden of blindness and vision impairment is still significantly high in the Southeast Asia region, accounting for 31% of the world's blind. That's why it is time to step up our investment in eye health in Southeast Asia. When we look at the findings from Southeast Asia, the estimated ROI for cataract treatment on average returns 22.4. Refractive error treatments return on average US\$11.8 for myopia (nearsightedness) and US\$8.4 for presbyopia (age-related vision loss). Together, investment in the two leading causes of blindness and vision impairment will return on average US\$10.4 for each dollar spent in Southeast Asia.

Transforming Lives in Southeast Asia: The Economic Benefits of Investing in Eye Health



In Cambodia, where The Foundation has been actively working in since 1998, over 90% of blindness cases are preventable and primarily caused by cataract. Unfortunately, many people either lack the financial means to undergo the necessary surgery or are unaware of the available options. There is an ongoing need to address the challenges surrounding eye health in Cambodia, and increased investments in this area can provide a viable solution. Notably, cataract surgery in Cambodia demonstrates an estimated ROI of US\$22.6, while the estimated ROIs for myopia treatment and presbyopia treatment are US\$4.5 and US\$3.0, respectively.

The findings provide a compelling case for impact and social investment networks to invest in eye health in Southeast Asia. Beyond the great economic return that investment in eye care yields, restored sight brings longer and healthier lives, reductions in extreme poverty, increased labor force participation and productivity, increased school attendance, gender equality and independence. Investing in eye health not only benefits individuals but also has a positive impact on communities and the region's economic development. Contact The Fred Hollows Foundation to get more information on the economic benefits of investing in eye health and explore how your organization can contribute to eye health development.



The Fred Hollows Foundation has been a key leader in advocating and promoting the need to prioritize eye health investments. The Foundation's transformative approach to eye health, which includes strengthening health systems and partnerships with governments, local partners and other stakeholders, has been a key driver of our success in restoring sight to millions of people worldwide. These partnerships have been critical in ensuring that eye health programs are sustainable and have a lasting impact.

The Fred Hollows Foundation is committed to ending avoidable blindness, but we can't do it alone. Urgent collective action is needed across government, non-government, philanthropy and the private sector to prioritise health system investments to meet the 2030 global eye care targets. If we don't act now, by 2050 it is estimated that more than 1.7 billion people will be living with avoidable vision impairment.

Eye health programs transform lives and now is the time to step up our investment in eye health.

We welcome corporate partners who are interested in investing in eye health to [get in touch with us](#). Visit our website at www.hollows.org if you are interested to find out more or contact llee@hollows.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH BEACH CLEAN UP

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BEACH CLEAN UP

Pasir Ris Beach Carpark E

All participants are to be fully vaccinated.

For more information & to register, please scan the Whatsapp QR Code and join the AAS Sustainability Social Interest Group.



AAS CYCLING INTEREST GROUP MONTHLY MEETUP

SATURDAY, 8 MARCH 2025 | 6.30AM SGT

For more information and to Register, please scan the Whatsapp QR Code and join the AAS Cycling Social Interest Group below.



[LINK](#)

Tuesday, 11 March 2025

AAS 70th Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Tuesday, 11 March 2023 | 6.30pm - 9.00pm SGT
Residence of Australian High Commissioner
9 White House Park, Singapore 257605



Agenda:

- 1 - To receive the Annual Report
- 2 - To receive last year's AGM Meeting Minutes
- 3 - To receive the Statement of Accounts for the previous financial year
- 4 - To elect Management Committee Members and an Auditor
- 5 - To consider any resolution, motion or proposal that has been properly tabled as part of the agenda for the meeting
- 6 - To discuss general business for which prior written notice has been received two weeks before AGM in accordance with Article IX(2) of AAS Constitution

AAS members (Life, Ordinary & authorized representative of Institutions) with Active membership may attend & vote during the meeting.

AAS Associate members may also attend but will not be allowed to vote.

At the meeting, members will have the opportunity to:

- find out about Australian Alumni Singapore's operations and finances
- ask questions about the operations and finances of Australian Alumni Singapore
- speak about any items on the agenda
- vote on any resolutions proposed

At the meeting, members will be asked to vote to:

- accept the minutes of the last annual general meeting
- accept the annual financial statements
- elect committee members
- appoint an auditor

Please kindly [REGISTER](#) no later than 5pm on Tuesday, 4 March 2025.

Thursday, 13 March 2025

RESEARCH
SPOTLIGHT
SERIES #1

ARE SMART DEVICES SECURE?

13 MAR 2025 | 4 – 5 PM SGT

📍 JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY (SINGAPORE CAMPUS)
C2-15

DR STEVE KERRISON

Senior Lecturer, Cybersecurity
James Cook University

We increasingly use smart devices in our everyday lives, but do they know too much about us, and do they keep that information secure? In this public lecture, Dr Steve demonstrates how hacked smart devices can be used to steal your fingerprints!

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Thursday, 20 March 2025

PEOPLES, CULTURES AND
CAREERS RESEARCH
CLUSTER WEBINAR SERIES



From Survivor to Thriver - A Scoping Review of the Return-To-Work (RTW) Experiences of Cancer Survivors

ONLINE WEBINAR | 20 MAR 2025 | 10 - 11 AM SGT

HOST

Professor of Organisational
Behaviour
James Cook University

PROFESSOR EDDY NG



SPEAKER

Senior Lecturer in
Organisational Behaviour
and Human Resources
Griffith University

DR CARYS CHAN



SUMMARY

This scoping review led by Griffith University and Hannover Life Re of Australasia examines global research on cancer survivors' return-to-work experiences, drawing upon 320 studies published between 2013 and 2023. By identifying

challenges, barriers, and facilitators, this research aims to contribute to the field of cancer rehabilitation and inform the development of effective interventions to support survivors on their recovery pathway.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, 26 March 2025



Join us for an insightful discussion on financial resilience, stretching your dollar, market trends, and key investment considerations in today's economic landscape. This session brings together experts from both advisory and brokerage perspectives to provide a well-rounded approach to managing and growing your wealth.

Key Topics:

- ✓ Financial Resilience: Strategies to safeguard your finances against uncertainties and economic downturns.
- ✓ Stretching Your Dollar: Practical budgeting and wealth preservation techniques to maximize financial efficiency.
- ✓ Market Trends: An overview of current market movements and how they impact investment decisions.
- ✓ Investment Considerations: Essential factors to assess before making investment choices, balancing risk and opportunity.

Event Details

- Date: 26 March 2025, Wednesday
- Time: 6.45pm - 9.30pm
- Venue: Prudential @ Scotts, 51 Scotts Road #01-01 Singapore 228241
- Cost: S10 for RMIT Alumni | S15 for non-alumni
- Venue Sponsor: Prudential Assurance Company Singapore

We look forward to seeing you there.

Eventbrite Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.sg/e/lets-talk-about-stretching-your-dollar-tickets-1243323517109?aff=oddtcreator>



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8-9 April 2025

Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre Hall A



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8 April 2025

Ageing Asia Eldercare
Operations Seminar



9 April 2025

Active
Ageing Seminar



8-9 April 2025

Demo Stage



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SOCIAL INTEREST GROUPS

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WhatsApp group



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AAS| Wine & Spirits Group

WhatsApp group



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AAS-Cycling Group

WhatsApp group



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AAS - Volunteer

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AAS - Leverage SEO Group



[LINK](#)

If you would like to form and lead an interest group, please feel free to contact secretariat@as.org.sg





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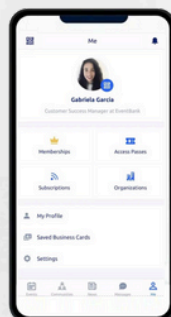
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Organisational Resilience in the New Normal

THE “NEW NORMAL”

As Governments, businesses and societies begin to adapt to the post-COVID 19 pandemic environment, organisations continue to evolve in a complex operating climate impacting daily operations, assurance to stakeholders and creating a sense of uncertainty. Left unchecked, these may materialise into potential undesirable consequences causing unnecessary disruption or leading to a crisis in their organisation.

Navigating through these complexities require trained and experienced professionals to ensure such threats do not become a reality and if they ever do, organisations must be ready to implement well tested contingency and response plans to recover from and resume critical operations.

It is a proven and well documented fact when organisations that are resilient and equipped to manage risks not only stand a higher chance of survival in their respective competitive fields but emerge stronger and ready to take on potential opportunities left behind by others who are not as well prepared.

Post-pandemic, more businesses, governments and key stakeholders will be requiring a greater adoption of business continuity and crisis management plans and procedures. Is your organisation ready?

WHY CLIENTS CHOOSE US

Clients want to partner with us because:

- We simplify resilience and continuity
- We “hand hold” you to develop your resilience plans (some say we do everything for them) at your pace
- We work with organisations of all sizes and maturity phases (i.e., regardless if it's a full programme or to review existing components)
- More importantly, our specialists are field-tested with actual planning, execution and response experience across multiple sectors (yet we don't charge sky high rates)

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Established since 2013, our goal is to enable governments and businesses to achieve organisational resilience through customised solutions specific to our clients' needs, goals and strategy

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- Business Continuity and Crisis Management:
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- Programme and policy development
- Business impact analysis and risk assessment
- Business continuity, emergency response and crisis management plan(s) development
- Training and awareness workshops
- Readiness tests and exercises
- Programme maintenance
- BCM and crisis management audits

Talk to us today at (65) 66796231 or email us Enquiries@infinitycontinuity.com, or simply visit our website at <http://www.infinitycontinuity.com> to find out how we can partner with you!

As part of the 2024/25 budget, the Australian Government announced that it will implement a new National Innovation visa, replacing the current Global Talent visa (subclass 858) from late 2024, to target exceptionally talented migrants who will drive growth in sectors of national importance. Although we are not sure on the parameters of the new visa, we think it will look for the cohort of candidates similar those under the current global talent visa programme.

On the other hand, the Business Innovation and Investment visa program (BIIP) will cease, most likely as a result of the Australian government taking on the Productive Commission's recommendation that the business migrants make limited economic contribution to Australia.

Budget 2024–25 | Budget Paper No. 2

Migration System Reforms

Payments (\$m)	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Department of Home Affairs	-	8.5	8.3	..	-
Australian Taxation Office	-	1.5	-	-	-
Department of the Treasury	-	*	*	*	*
Total – Payments	-	10.0	8.3	..	-
<i>Related receipts (\$m)</i>					
Australian Taxation Office	-	*	*	*	*
Department of Home Affairs	-	-45.0	-40.0	-35.0	-35.0
Total – Receipts	-	-45.0	-40.0	-35.0	-35.0

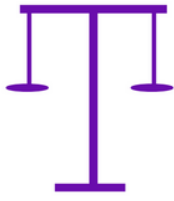
The Government will provide \$18.3 million over four years from 2024–25 to further reform Australia’s migration system to drive greater economic prosperity and restore its integrity. Funding includes:

- \$15.0 million over three years from 2024–25 for information and education activities to provide migrant workers with accurate and appropriate information about workplace safeguards, protections and compliance measures related to migration laws
- \$1.9 million in 2024–25 to conduct a data-matching pilot between the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Taxation Office of income and employment data to mitigate exploitation of migrant workers and abuse of Australia’s labour market and migration system.

The Government will implement a new National Innovation visa, replacing the current Global Talent visa (subclass 858) from late 2024, to target exceptionally talented migrants who will drive growth in sectors of national importance. The Business Innovation and Investment visa program (BIIP) will cease, with refunds of the visa application charge provided from September 2024 for those who wish to withdraw their BIIP application. The measure includes \$1.4 million in 2024–25 for necessary system changes for the implementation of a new visa and closure of the BIIP.

For those who qualify under the current Global Talent Visa programme, we encourage you to get in touch with us so we can assist you with your EOI and visa application submission: globaltalent@alclawyers.com.au or phone [+61279009570](tel:+61279009570).

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SQNLDR (ret) Hyder Gulam FRCNA FACN LLM MBA

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Hyder was born in Singapore and educated in Melbourne. He is a registered nurse (UK), a qualified lawyer, an accredited mediator, a registered Migration Agent as well as a Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing in Australia. He has post graduate qualifications in business/management, law and nursing. He has served as an officer with the Royal Australian Air Force, both in Australia and overseas. He has published in areas such as trans-cultural nursing, health law, criminal law and military law. Hyder has experiences in a range of legal areas and has worked across the legal spectrum, from working in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for one of the world's biggest law firms, to General Legal Counsel of one of the world's largest Sovereign Wealth Funds.

AAS MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



TEMPUS TWO

MAKING AUSTRALIAN GIN HISTORY





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* Invisalign Singapore is facilitating the outreach program for corporates. The dental treatments, Invisalign treatment consultation, offers and payments will be directly between the patient and the partner clinic for this program.
** Data on file at Align Technology, September 30, 2022

Don't wait any longer - **register now through the QR code on the poster** and take advantage of this amazing opportunity. Your family members can enjoy it too, so spread the word and let's achieve those dream smiles together!

LET'S GET THOSE SMILES SHINING!

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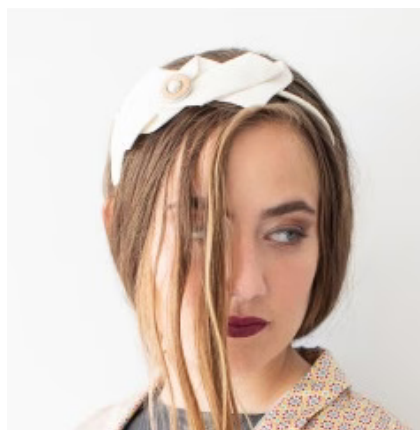
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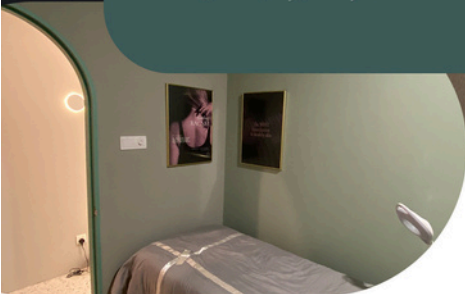
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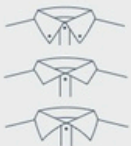


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